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DRAFT REPORT

on the implementation of the Creative Europe Programme 2021-2027
(2023/2003(INI))

Committee on Culture and Education

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EXPLANATORY STATEMENT - SUMMARY OF FACTS AND FINDINGS

1. Introduction

The objectives of the Implementation Report of the Creative Europe programme 2021-2027 are to assess and evaluate the implementation of the Regulation (EU) 2021/818 establishing the Creative Europe programme (2021 to 2027)¹, which came into force on 1 January 2021.

Based on the available data, this Report assesses the years 2021 and 2022. Pursuant to Article 21 of the Regulation, no later than 31 December 2024, the Commission shall carry out an interim evaluation of the programme and submit an evaluation report to the European Parliament, no later than six months after the interim evaluation has been carried out.

Creative Europe is the European Union's direct fund providing support to the cultural and creative sectors² (CCS), which all have intrinsic cultural and social value and display significant economic weight by contributing to both direct and indirect employment and economic growth. Against this background, support is vital to protect cultural diversity and to strengthen competitiveness. It is important that the Creative Europe programme, therefore, tackles the challenges facing these sectors, amplified by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russian aggression against Ukraine.

The new programme retains the structure of the previous one and comprises three strands: Media, which covers the audiovisual sector; Culture covering all the cultural and creative sectors except the audiovisual sector; Cross-sectoral, which combines actions across all cultural and creative sectors, including news media, as well as support for Creative Europe desks. The three strands account respectively for 58%, 33% and 9% of the financial envelope of the Creative Europe programme. The structure of this report unfolds around three pillars, reflecting the structure of the programme.

The European Commission, as the institution responsible for the implementation of the policy aspects of the programme, has assigned functions to the following bodies to carry out its implementation:

- Directorate-General Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (DG EAC) manages the Culture strand of the programme;
- Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology (DG CNECT) manages the Media strand of the programme;

¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32021R0818>

² Cultural and Creative sectors (CCS) include, inter alia, architecture, archives, libraries and museums, artistic crafts, audiovisual (including film, television, video games and multimedia), tangible and intangible cultural heritage, design (including fashion design), festivals, music, literature, performing arts (including theatre and dance), books and publishing, radio, and visual arts.

- Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs (DG ECFIN) coordinates and leads on the implementation of the Invest EU, in close cooperation with the relevant Policy Directorates-General and in the case of Media Invest with DG CNECT;
- Directorate General for Communication (DG COMM) handles the overall communication of the programme;
- European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) is responsible for the direct management of the programme, under the Commission’s political responsibility³;
- Creative Europe Committee, set up in 2011, assists and supports the European Commission. Additionally, this Committee provides an opinion on the Commission’s Annual Work programme, under Regulation 182/2011.

A network of Creative Europe desks act as advisory bodies. Their mission is to promote the programme, provide information and guidance to potential applicants as well as to foster cross-border cooperation and ensure proper dissemination of funding awarded and results obtained in each respective countries. So far, 40 desks have been established and, from June 2023, the programme fully finances the Creative Europe Desk in Ukraine⁴.

In drafting the current report, the Rapporteur availed of the findings from meetings with DG EAC and DG CNECT, as well as wide consultations and meetings with stakeholders and national desks. Information gathered from a Shadow Rapporteurs’ meeting with stakeholders was also taken into account. Following the meeting, 20 written submissions were received including several submissions from stakeholders who were unable to attend the meeting with the Shadow Rapporteurs.

Information and recommendations gathered in this report are also based on the following written sources:

- A European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS) study published in July 2023, titled “*The early implementation of the 2021-2027 EU programmes Erasmus +, Creative Europe, European Solidarity Corps and Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (Strand 3)*”;
- A Policy Department for Structural and Cohesion Policies study, published in July 2023, titled “*EU funding programmes for 2021-2027 in Culture, Media, Education, Youth and Sport: first lessons, challenges and future perspectives: Creative Europe*”.

³ EACEA is responsible for establishing project monitoring and evaluation requirements. The regulation 2021/818 establishes a brand new set of programme indicators (in Annex II). No data is so far available for the period 2021-2027.

⁴ An amendment to the Creative Europe Work programme 2023 ensures the Creative Desk in Ukraine will receive €28 830.

2. Main novelties of the Creative Europe programme 2021-2027

As the previous generation of the programme, Creative Europe has two general objectives. On the one hand, it aims to safeguard and promote the richness and diversity of Europe's cultural and linguistic heritage and, on the other, the programme aims at boosting the economic potential of the cultural and creative sectors. These two general objectives are complemented by three specific objectives⁵, which apply to the three strands.

Compared to the previous programme (2014-2020), the current one features several novelties, which are expected to contribute to the recovery of the cultural and creative sectors from the effects of the COVID-19, supporting their efforts to become more inclusive, digital and environmentally sustainable. For this purpose, the programme has been allocated a **total budget of EUR 2.44 billion**⁶ for the years 2021-2027, which represents an increase of 68% compared to the 2014-2020 programme. This budget increase reflects the commitment of the European Union to help the sectors recover and foster resilience in the years ahead.

The new programme mainstreams its actions through the **cross-cutting priorities** of inclusion, equality, with a focus on gender balance, and greening. The work programmes for 2021 and 2022 reserve particular attention to the dimension of social inclusion as well as gender balance. In this regard, special attention is given to applicants presenting specific strategies aimed at ensuring gender balance and inclusiveness. Under the Culture strand, the cooperation scheme, as well as the networks, foresee inclusiveness as a priority, whilst the mobility scheme has introduced a top-up for participants with special needs⁷. In 2022, for the first time, the training scheme under the Media strand introduced a mentoring module to strengthen diversity and gender balance in the industry.

Environmental sustainability remains one of the priorities of the programme and is referenced in all of its calls; the programme does not, however, directly support climate mitigation measures. Almost all proposals submitted within the Media strand are requested to provide a strategy to improve the greening of the industry (except for three actions where this is not applicable⁸). In 2022, a focus on greening was proposed in the Talent & Skills action, in order to improve greening skills within the audiovisual industry. The relevance and quality of these strategies were then assessed in the award criteria. Projects that encourage the sectors to adopt

⁵ The Programme has the following three specific objectives: (a) to enhance artistic and cultural cooperation at the European level in order to support the creation of European works and strengthen the economic, social and external dimension of and innovation and mobility in Europe's cultural and creative sectors; (b) to promote competitiveness, scalability, cooperation, innovation and sustainability, including through mobility, in the European audiovisual sector; (c) to promote policy cooperation and innovative actions supporting all strands of the Programme and to promote a diverse, independent and pluralistic media environment, and media literacy, thereby fostering freedom of artistic expression, intercultural dialogue and social inclusion.

⁶ The financial envelope for the period 2021-2027 amounts to EUR 1.8 billion with EUR 600.000 million as an additional contribution originating from the NextGeneration EU.

⁷ In 2021-2022, under the cooperation projects scheme, around 20% of the selected projects present social inclusion as first or second priority, corresponding to more than 100 projects funded.

⁸ These actions are: European Film Distribution, European Film Sales and Films on the move.

more environmentally friendly practices and business-models are supported by the Culture strand as well, in particular under the European cooperation projects and the networks, where sustainability is one of the priorities that can be selected by applicants.

The evaluations carried out in 2021-2022 show that nearly all applicants have taken advantage of the opportunity to start incorporating cross-cutting priorities in their projects. At present, the structure of the calls allow for flexibility so that the project beneficiaries can decide on how to integrate these new priorities into their projects. Several stakeholders, however, recommend that the programme would function better if the beneficiaries were allowed to focus on one inclusion measure as a priority, rather than spending resources on incorporating all priorities, which may be less efficient and unproductive.

Administrative simplification and accessibility are key elements introduced in the current programme in order to broaden the participation of a variety of cultural and creative actors and to alleviate the administrative burden of related procedures. Higher co-financing rates for cooperation projects, as well as several Media actions apply as of 2021, with the aim of facilitating the participation of micro and small-sized organisations. From 2021 onwards, the programme foresees the implementation of the following simplification measures:

- A wider deployment of lump-sums, with a focus on deliverables and results rather than expenses;
- A simplified verification of financial capacity;
- An application of budgetary commitments in multi-annual instalments providing longer-term support whilst reducing administrative burden;
- The introduction of the corporate e-Grant system, which aims to speed-up the administrative procedures of grant management.

2.1 The Culture *strand*

The *Culture strand* has been strengthened by increasing the budget for the platform scheme, introducing grants to cultural entities along with a new scheme for artists, creators and culture professionals to facilitate their transnational mobility. The latter was tested under the previous programme via the I-Portunus pilot project, which allowed for the host of artists, who may not have the means to attract international talent, to be part of the mobility scheme. The mobility action, fully implemented in 2023, supports “artists in residence” activities and other types of place-bound cultural activities organised for and with the local communities. Another new feature of this strand is the sectoral and targeted approach complementing horizontal instruments with annual actions focusing on sector-specific needs in music, books, architecture, cultural heritage, design, fashion and cultural tourism. This strand also supports the European Heritage Label and a series of awards in the relevant sectors⁹. The Cooperation projects scheme

⁹ The Music Moves Europe Talent Award (awarded to 5 artists in 2023); the European Heritage awards; the European Prize for Literature; the European Prize for Contemporary Architecture;

remains a cornerstone of the Culture strand, albeit with some relevant new features. These include calls for three different project sizes (small, medium and large) and an increase in co-financing rates, especially for small-sized projects¹⁰.

2.2 The Media strand

The *Media strand* has been bolstered by structuring the priorities of the new programme around four different clusters (content, business, audience and policy support) with a view to ensure broader flexibility in the supported actions, as well as encouraging cooperation along the audiovisual value-chain. The Media strand further enhances its European added-value by broadening the participation of countries with different audio-visual capacities, in addition to fostering cross-border collaboration. In this regard, in 2021, the programme implemented targeted measures to ensure more level playing field across seven relevant schemes¹¹. This strand features three other main novelties. The first is a new specific action, launched in 2022, to support video games and immersive content development. The second is the kick-off of MediaInvest, as foreseen under the MAAP¹², which is a European equity platform aimed at boosting investments in audiovisual production and distribution. The main aim of this action is to mobilise private investment within the European audiovisual industry, which has been kick started by blending resources from both InvestEU programme and the Media strand of the Creative Europe programme. The third, a new form of funding, is the action Media360°, which aims at boosting cooperation and synergies amongst existing ecosystems to create an impact across the value-chain.

2.3 The Cross-sectoral strand

The *Cross-sectoral strand*, managed jointly by DG EAC and DG CNECT, is the most innovative one of the current programme. For the first time, the programme covers the news media sector by promoting activities that, while taking into account the digital transition, enhance a free, diverse and pluralistic media environment. In addition, this strand encourages innovative approaches to content creation, access, distribution, and promotion across the cultural and creative sectors with a brand new action called the Creative Innovation Lab. This strand continues to support the establishment and activities of the Creative Europe desks as well as wider policy cooperation and outreach actions. The support to the Cultural and Creative Sectors' Guarantee Facility market instrument, launched in 2016, was integrated with the new InvestEU programme in 2021.

¹⁰ The co-financing rates are of 80% for small scale; 70% for medium-scale and 60% for large-scale. the grants are respectively of EUR 200.000; EUR 1 million and EUR 2 million;

¹¹ The new European co-development scheme has ensured a strong diversity of production consortia with 70% of selected projects based on collaboration between lower capacity countries and other countries. The new European mini-slate development scheme has targeted projects from lower audiovisual capacity countries with applications coming from 19 different countries.

¹² [Media and Audiovisual Action Plan](#)

Another element that can, in its own way, be an unintended novelty for the 2021-2027 programme is Brexit. The new programme has been implemented without the United Kingdom as an EU Member State. Consequently, the country is eligible to participate as a Third country. The UK has, however, taken the decision not to participate with the current programme, resulting in the closure of the UK Creative Europe desk. In 2014-2019, the UK's participation meant a combined total support of €100 million (EUR 72 million under the Media strand and EUR 27 million under the Culture strand). During that time, 609 projects, involving UK beneficiaries, received around EUR 68 million¹³.

3. Third country participation

Participation in the programme is open to Member States as well as several Third countries. The latter includes those of the European Free Trade Association¹⁴ (EFTA), which are part of the European Economic Area (EEA), acceding countries, candidate countries and potential candidates¹⁵, and the European Neighbourhood Policy countries¹⁶. The intention is that these third countries will become full participants in the programme in the future. As foreseen by article 9 of the Regulation, however, the participation in the Media and Cross-sectoral strands is conditional on specific requirements¹⁷ or a duly justified derogation.

In 2021, provisional participation was granted to the following third countries until 31st December 2022:

- **Full provisional participation:** Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia;
- **Partial provisional participation:** Tunisia, Georgia and Ukraine.

Beyond that date, continued participation in the Media and Cross-sectoral strands for these countries was contingent on evidence being submitted that they meet the conditions set out in Directive 2010/13/EU (AVMS Directive). In view of the efforts made to gradually align their

¹³ [“The Impact of Creative Europe in UK 2014-2020”, 2021 Creative Europe UK Desk’.](#)

¹⁴ Iceland, Norway, Liechtenstein, all three as of 1 January 2021.

¹⁵ Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo- only for the “Culture” strand and the “Creative Europe desks” action (part of “Cross-sectoral” strand), Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey (commenced negotiations to participate in the Creative Europe Programme, only for the “Culture” strand and the “Creative Europe desks” action (part of “Cross-sectoral” strand).

¹⁶ Armenia only for the “Culture” strand and the “Creative Europe desks” action (part of “Cross-sectoral” strand), Georgia (only for the “Culture” and “Cross Sectoral” strands and the “Talent & Skills”, “European Festivals and Festival networks”, and “Audience development and Film education” actions part of “Media” strand), Tunisia only for the “Culture” and “Cross Sectoral” strands and the “Talent & Skills”, “European Festivals and Festival networks”, and “Audience development and Film (part of “Media” strand), Ukraine only for the “Culture” and “Cross Sectoral” strands and the “Talent & Skills”, “European Festivals and Festival networks”, and “Audience development and Film education” actions (part of “Media” strand).

¹⁷ Fulfilment of the conditions set out in Directive 2010/13/EU as amended by Directive 2018/1808 (AVMSD Directive).

national legislation, an extension of the provisional participation was granted until 30 June 2023.

This meant that by the end of June 2023:

- Three countries¹⁸, submitted the required evidence and their participation was confirmed until 2027;
- The period of provisional participation was extended for five countries¹⁹ until the end of 2023, as a recognition to the progress made towards alignment.

4. Overview of the first two years of programme implementation

Between 2021 and 2022, 67 calls for proposals were published in total under the three strands²⁰. In 2021-2022, 19 calls for proposals were published under the Culture strand, 37 calls under the Media strand and 11 under the Cross-sectoral. The average success rate of project proposals differs between the strands: 30% for Culture compared to 66% for Media. In comparison, the annual success rate for those presented under the Cross-sectoral strand are particularly low varying from 23% in 2021 to 24% in 2022.

i. Year 2021 - budgetary aspects

The 2021 annual work programme was adopted in May 2021 and around EUR 300 million²¹ was allocated to promote the diversity and competitiveness of the cultural and creative sectors across Europe. In the first year, the programme benefited from an overall increase of EUR 60 million compared to 2020, which represents a budget increase of 25%. The first year of implementation has, however, been challenging and complex due to the late adoption of the programme regulation and the first annual work programme, in addition to the requirement to put the Regulation into specific actions. This has caused a push forward on the commencement of activities (calls, selection procedure, contracts and related payments).

Due to delays caused by the MFF cycle, some payments had to be moved from 2021 to 2022. This unprecedented situation, however, appeared to have no influence on the funding absorption capacity of the programme, for which all the commitments appropriations of the 2021 voted budget were implemented. In terms of calls for proposals, 21 were published in the first year of implementation (12 project grants and 9 lump sums).

ii. Year 2022 - budgetary aspects

¹⁸ Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania and Ukraine.

¹⁹ Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Tunisia and Georgia.

²⁰ The total number of calls for proposals published in 2021 amounts to 21, whilst the total number of calls for proposals published in 2022 amounts to 46, which is more than the double of the previous year.

²¹ Total 2021 budget (in million): EUR 298.689; 2021 budget allocated to Culture strand: EUR 97.347. 2021 budget allocated to Media strand: EUR 172.609; 2021 budget allocated to Cross-sectoral strand EUR 27.732.

The year-by-year spread of the seven-year budget was front-loaded, with a third of the Creative Europe financial envelope being committed during the first two years of the programme, the highest so far. The 2022 annual work programme was adopted in January 2021 with a total budget of around EUR 400 million²². In 2022, the programme benefited from an overall increase close to EUR 100 million representing a budget increase of 33% compared to the previous year. In 2022, the Agency implemented approximately 90% of the budget, while about 10% was implemented in a centralised manner.

The uneven annual budget profiles called for an exceptional management and programming effort. Therefore, with a view to limiting funding volatility and reducing administrative burden when providing long-term support, multi-annual programming has been implemented in both work programmes 2021-2022. In terms of calls for proposals, 46 were published in 2022 (19 project grants and 27 lump sums).

iii. Administrative challenges and opportunities

From the total number of calls published, the number of those promoting lump-sum types of action compared to project grants is quite high. This trend is even more evident in 2022 when from the total amount of calls published, 58.7% opted for the lump-sum formula. This data indicates that the programme is gradually evolving and is striving to introduce more simplification and streamlined procedures. Stakeholders highlighted the introduction of lump-sum funding as being a major advantage, as it eases the administrative burden both in terms of the application and implementation phases. Despite the efforts made in terms of simplifying and streamlining processes, however, several beneficiaries made complaints regarding the renewed application and monitoring procedures, which partially fail to meet the objective of facilitating participation. This is especially relevant to the smaller entities that have limited financial and human resources. Many have asked for the new e-Grant system to be further tested for user-friendliness and technical issues. This situation also affects the Creative Europe desks, which have reported an increase in requests to find solutions for problems encountered by the applicants with the digital platform.

iv. Implementation of the Culture strand in 2021-2022

The calls published under the *Culture strand* attracted 1,475 applications in total requesting a total budget of EUR 875 million for all actions. The most competitive scheme of the strand is the European cooperation projects, which received the highest budget ever for their implementation. This is reflected in the total number of applications in that year, which increased by 45% over 2021 (169 projects selected from 682 applications giving an overall success rate of 26%). Overall, within the two years, 291 cooperation projects were supported

²² Total 2022 budget (in million): EUR 395.332; 2021 budget allocated to Culture strand: EUR 134.388; 2021 budget allocated to Media strand: EUR 226.053; 2021 budget allocated to Cross-sectoral strand EUR 34.892.

under this scheme, with a stable number of large-scale cooperation projects being supported, whilst the number of small-scaled ones also increased substantially²³.

Under the literary translation action, 90 projects were supported in 2021 and 2022 (each year around 40 projects were selected initially and an additional five were added from the reserve list). These projects resulted in the translation of 1,024 books written by 815 authors and translated by 651 translators. The books originated from 40 different languages and were translated into 26 target languages.

The year 2022 also saw the launch of the mobility scheme, “Culture Moves Europe”, which is of three years’ duration with monthly rolling evaluations. This scheme, as the successor to the i-Portunus pilot project (2018-2022), provides mobility grants to artists and cultural professionals in 40 Creative Europe countries. It covers the sectors of architecture, cultural heritage, design and fashion design, literary translation, music, performing arts and visual arts. Implemented by the Goethe-Institut, this action has a budget of €21 million for a three-year period from 2022 until 2025.

Culture Moves Europe offers two types of grant:

- The individual mobility scheme (for individuals and groups of up to five persons²⁴). Following five monthly evaluations, 4,665 applications were submitted representing a total of 7,689 individuals. Grants of EUR 3.6 million were awarded to 1,802 artists and cultural professionals.
- The residency action, which is aimed at organisations and established individual artists who regularly organise residencies and are interested in hosting artists and cultural professionals (The first call’s deadline was in June 2023).

v. Implementation of the Media strand in 2021-2022

The calls published under the *Media strand* attracted 2,124 applicants in total, 929 in 2021 and 1195 in 2022. Among these applicants, 63% were successful in securing funding in 2021 and 69% in 2022. The large number of applicants in the first two years demonstrates the strong interest of the European audiovisual sector in the programme. Despite the decrease in the success rate in 2021, the Media strand continues to play a key role in fostering growth and resilience of the sector. The Media actions that financed the highest number of grants in 2021 and 2022 are: Film Distribution (482 grants), Development Slate (166 grants), Co-development (117 grants) and European Festivals (92 grants).

²³ Small scale projects (COOP 1): 82 in 2021, 130 in 2022, a total of 212; Medium Scale projects (COOP 2): 32 in 2021, 27 in 2022, a total of 59; Large scale projects (COOP 3): 10 in 2021, 10 in 2022, a total of 20.

²⁴ This action offers financial support to individuals who travel between 7 and 60 days or groups of up to 5 persons who travel between 7 and 21 days. The rolling calls are open every year between autumn and spring.

vi. Implementation of the Cross-sectoral strand in 2021-2022

The calls published under the *Cross-sectoral strand* attracted around 243 applicants, requesting funding of EUR 210 million. The first call for Media Literacy was launched in 2022, resulting in six grants being awarded and one being denied due to insufficient budget. Also under this strand, two grants were awarded under the call for Defending Media Freedom and Pluralism. The Journalism partnerships' calls have seen a considerable increase in the number of projects being submitted, ranging from 30 in 2021 to 54 in 2022. The success rate of most calls under this strand were, however, quite low with only 23% of applicants receiving a grant in 2021 and 24% recipients in 2022.

vii. Delivering of the programme

In 2021 and 2022, the programme supported a total 1,909 projects (1,422 under Media, 441 under Culture and 46 Cross-sectoral). In both years, the programme provided grants to around 3,860 organisations (2,146 under Culture, 1,452 under Media and 262 under Cross-sectoral); data provided reveals that 73% of the beneficiaries under Culture were small-sized organisations. Despite the positive data, stakeholders underlined challenges relating to the uptake and participation of smaller organisations in the programme.

5. Programme contribution to key EU challenges and priorities

The main EU challenges also relevant for the cultural, creative and audiovisual sectors are digital transformation, green transition, the long-term effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, geopolitical instability caused by the Russian aggression against Ukraine and the EU strategic autonomy.

The Creative Europe programme addresses all the afore-mentioned challenges, albeit differently. The Regulation has strong reference to the digital transformation and the post-pandemic recovery whilst the green transition and the EU strategic autonomy are tackled to a much lesser extent.

The Regulation does not refer to the Russian aggression as the Regulation was already in force when Russia launched its full-scale invasion against Ukraine in February 2022; this also applies to the work programmes of 2021 and 2022. Nevertheless, the programme has shown a great level of flexibility and resilience in responding to urgent needs arising from both the pandemic and the Russian aggression against Ukraine. The effects of the Russo-Ukrainian war were included as one of the programme's key challenges to the work programme 2023. A targeted call of EUR 5 million to support the Ukrainian artists and cultural sectors was launched in November 2022, under the Culture strand. The three projects selected, involving 16 European and Ukrainian organisations, offer flexible funding mechanisms and capacity building in three areas: support to artists and cultural organisations, integration of displaced Ukrainian artists through the arts, and the reconstruction of cultural heritage.

The post-pandemic recovery challenges were primarily addressed in the 2021-2022 calls under the Culture strand where the effects of the pandemic were still strong. Lastly, the challenge of the EU strategic autonomy is mentioned in the Cross-sectoral strand only by referring to the relevant role of journalists and media in democracy.

6. Conclusion

The analysis carried out for this report is based on limited data covering the two years of the programme's implementation. Moreover, when this report was drafted, data resulting from the qualitative and quantitative indicators, established by the new Regulation, were not yet available. It is, therefore, only possible to draw a preliminary assessment of the programme and not a thorough evaluation of its performance for the whole 2021-2027 programme period.

The first two years of implementation have been greatly impacted by many unexpected external factors that consistently affected programme development. The COVID-19 pandemic and recovery, followed by the war of aggression against Ukraine and its repercussions such as high inflation, have disrupted the entire cultural ecosystem throughout 2021 and 2022. Furthermore, the implementation of the programme in 2021 was delayed due to the late adoption of its legal basis. Despite this scenario, the early implementation of the programme has been quite effective overall.

The Rapporteur welcomes the reactivity of the programme to unforeseen challenges and its ability to adjust when required. In this regard, the budget increase and higher co-financing rates have been positively received by the stakeholders, as has the extension of deadlines for many calls and related flexibility showed by both the Commission and EACEA to beneficiaries. The Rapporteur, however, regrets that the substantial budget increase will be partially absorbed by high inflation, which may require further adjustments in the remaining years of this MFF cycle. The newly adopted simplification measures appear to have had positive effects so far and they should be further developed.

The Rapporteur believes that it is key to have early and reliable timetabling of calls for proposals in the near future, thus allowing candidates to have more time to plan in advance. Furthermore, improvements to the IT tools deployed for the Creative Europe programme must be implemented; in particular, the IT tools must suit the diverse types of organisations applying to the programme.

Lastly, the Rapporteur considers the mainstreaming of the cross-cutting priorities across the three strands as a positive development. Considering, however, the relatively recent start of the programme, along with the complexity entailed in assessing the societal impact of projects, the Rapporteur recommends a more in-depth monitoring and assessment of this new feature. This will provide a better understanding of how the programme functions in relation to this specific aspect.

MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

on the implementation of the Creative Europe Programme 2021-2027 (2023/2003(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, in particular, Articles 167, 173(3) and 294(7) thereof,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) No 1295/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing the Creative Europe programme (2014 to 2020)¹,
- having regard to the Commission proposal of 5 May 2018 for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Creative Europe programme (2021 to 2027) and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1295/2013 (COM(2018)0366),
- having regard to its position at first reading of 28 March 2019 on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Creative Europe programme (2021 to 2027) and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1295/2013²,
- having regard to the opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee of 12 December 2018 on ‘Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Creative Europe programme (2021 to 2027) and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1295/2013’³,
- having regard to the opinion of the European Committee of the Regions of 6 February 2019 on ‘Creative Europe and A New European Agenda for Culture’⁴,
- having regard to the Commission report of 30 April 2018 entitled ‘Mid-term evaluation of the Creative Europe programme (2014-2020)’ (COM(2018)0248),
- having regard to Commission Implementing Decision C(2021)3563 of 26 May 2021 on the adoption of the work programme for the implementation of the Creative Europe Programme for 2021,
- having regard to the Commission 2021 Annual Work Programme for the implementation of the Creative Europe Programme,
- having regard to Commission Implementing Decision C(2022)6138 of 31 August 2022 amending Implementing Decision C(2021)3563 on the financing of the Creative Europe Programme for 2021-2023 and the adoption of the work programmes for 2021 and 2022,– having regard to the Commission 2022 Annual Work Programme for the

¹ OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 221.

² OJ C 108, 26.3.2021, p. 934.

³ OJ C 110, 22.3.2019, p. 87.

⁴ OJ C 168, 16.05.2019, p. 37.

- implementation of the Creative Europe Programme,
- having regard to Commission Implementing Decision C(2023)3227 of 5 June 2023 amending Implementing Decision C(2021)3563 on the financing of the Creative Europe Programme for 2021-2025 and the adoption of the work programmes for 2021, 2022 and 2023,
 - having regard to the Commission communication of 3 December 2020 entitled ‘Europe’s Media in the Digital Decade: An Action Plan to Support Recovery and Transformation’ (COM(2020)0784),
 - having regard to the Commission communication of 22 May 2018 entitled ‘A New European Agenda for Culture’ (COM(2018)0267),
 - having regard to its resolution of 14 December 2022 on the implementation of the New European Agenda for Culture and the EU Strategy for International Cultural Relations⁵,
 - having regard to the Council resolution of 7 December 2022 on the EU Work Plan for Culture 2023–2026⁶,
 - having regard to its resolution of 20 October 2021 on Europe’s Media in the Digital Decade: an Action Plan to Support Recovery and Transformation⁷,
 - having regard to its resolution of 17 April 2020 on EU coordinated action to combat the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences⁸,
 - having regard to Rule 54 of its Rules of Procedure, as well as Article 1(1)(e) of, and Annex 3 to, the decision of the Conference of Presidents of 12 December 2002 on the procedure for granting authorisation to draw up own-initiative reports,
- A. whereas the data gathered confirms the considerable interest of the cultural and creative sectors in the programme; whereas higher co-financing rates for different actions under the Culture and Media strands have proven beneficial in supporting the cultural and creative ecosystems, especially in the aftermath of the pandemic;
- B. whereas the Creative Europe programme 2021-2027 features an overall budget increase of about 68 % compared to its predecessor; whereas the overall budget has been frontloaded with a third of the financial envelope committed in the years 2021 and 2022 to address, inter alia, the fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic;
- C. whereas one of the main novelties of the programme is that it mainstreams the cross-cutting priorities of inclusion and diversity, in particular gender balance, and greening;
- D. whereas the administrative management procedures of the Creative Europe programme (application, evaluation and reporting), are still considered by a significant number of beneficiaries and potential beneficiaries to be highly time-consuming and burdensome,

⁵ OJ C 177, 17.05.2023, p. 78.

⁶ OJ C 466, 7.12.2022, p. 1.

⁷ OJ C 184, 5.5.2022, p. 71.

⁸ OJ C 316, 6.8.2021, p. 2.

despite some progress in terms of simplification;

- E. whereas the Culture strand promotes the networking of creative communities and fosters cross-border collaboration, with a particular focus on cooperation projects; whereas, within the first two years of implementation, the cooperation project scheme emerged as the most competitive under the Culture strand, providing support to 291 projects;
 - F. whereas the Media strand plays a significant role in fostering growth and resilience within the audiovisual sector; whereas it has attracted 2 124 applicants in the two-year period 2021-2022, with a 66 % average success rate;
 - G. whereas the Cross-sectoral strand features a greater number of novelties reflecting new objectives; whereas the cross-cutting actions supporting the news media sector constitute a brand new focus of the Creative Europe programme;
 - H. whereas enhancing mobility in Europe's cultural and creative sectors is a specific objective of the programme pursued through a dedicated new scheme under the Culture strand;
 - I. whereas the public support source for the audiovisual ecosystem in Europe originates mainly from the national level with the Media strand complementing the national systems by supporting projects with a long-lasting impact;
 - J. whereas the Creative Europe desks play a key role as intermediaries between the Commission, the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA), applicants and beneficiaries; whereas more than 60 % of all applicants in 2021-2022 contacted their local desk before submitting an application;
1. Highlights that the new generation of the Creative Europe programme continues to generate significant interest within the cultural, creative and audiovisual sectors, with an increasing number of applications received under the three strands, resulting in a proportionate decrease in the success rate of applications;
 2. Welcomes the programme's response to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, which severely disrupted the cultural and creative sectors even prior to the commencement of the current programme;
 3. Emphasises the need to strike a balance between harmonised administrative management systems for all EU programmes, on the one hand, and the specific needs of different beneficiaries, on the other; urges, therefore, the Commission and the EACEA to step-up their efforts to simplify the administrative management procedures of the Creative Europe programme 2021-2027;
 4. Calls on the Commission to schedule regular capacity-building exchanges with beneficiaries to outline novelties such as new requirements under the reporting system, including General Data Protection Regulation⁹-compliant deliverables; underlines that

⁹ Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC. OJ L 119, 4.5.2016, p. 1.

the reporting system must be improved to facilitate ease of use;

5. Stresses the crucial importance of maintaining regular and, where relevant, targeted exchanges with the cultural, creative and audiovisual sectors with the aim of achieving beneficial cooperation; reminds the Commission of the importance of ensuring appropriate stakeholder involvement in the preparation of future yearly work programmes;
6. Underlines the willingness of a significant number of beneficiaries to share their achievements and results with the cultural, creative and audiovisual sectors as well as European citizens; points out, in this regard, that the platform made available for this purpose is considered unsatisfactory, calls on the Commission, therefore, to involve beneficiaries in the development of a more suitable platform;

Budget

7. Highlights that the current Creative Europe programme, despite the significantly increased budget for the period 2021-2027, is still oversubscribed; calls on the Commission and the Member States, in this regard, to substantially increase the financial envelope of the Creative Europe programme 2028-2034;
8. Recognises the urgent need in the two-year period 2021-2022 to frontload expenditure in order to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and those of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine; underlines, however, the detrimental impact that this measure will have in the second half of the financial cycle;
9. Urges the Member States and the Commission, in view of the high subscription rates, in addition to rampant inflation, which is severely affecting beneficiaries' operational capacity, to ensure that there are no budget cuts to the programme's envelope in the upcoming budgetary years;

Culture strand

10. Welcomes the introduction of the sectoral approach as a new feature of the Culture strand complementing the horizontal actions; calls for its enhancement through an adequate budget allocation to cater for the respective needs of those sectors that may require a more targeted approach;
11. Recognises that the increased co-financing rates, especially for small-scale cooperation projects, are beneficial and facilitate the participation of small-sized organisations; in this regard, calls on the Commission and the EACEA to allow project consortiums to independently define how funding is distributed among their partners, as long as the overall co-funding rate applies at project level;
12. Acknowledges the high quality of applications received under the mobility scheme; in this regard, calls on the Commission to safeguard geographical balance in addition to increasing participation from countries that are underrepresented;
13. Calls on the Commission to increase the promotion of Culture Moves Europe to a wider audience, with the aid and support of all Creative Europe desks, through communication and outreach activities specifically targeting less represented countries and sectors, as

well as artists with disabilities;

14. Emphasises the positive impact of the green and family top-ups implemented for the mobility scheme, which represent a concrete example of how the programme can be more inclusive; calls on the Commission, therefore, to consider implementing this approach in other actions of the Creative Europe programme;
15. Welcomes the increase in funding for the European Platforms for the promotion of emerging artists under the Culture strand and highlights the positive impact it has had on diversity by increasing the visibility of artists and their works on an international scale; calls on the Commission, therefore, to continue developing this action by ensuring adequate funding and promotion;
16. Calls for a more strategic and sector-oriented approach for the music sector, building on the results of the Music Moves Europe preparatory action; in this regard, stresses the importance of a regular structured dialogue between the music sector and the Commission;
17. Emphasises the importance of the special action of the European Capital of Culture as a catalyst for the cultural and economic regeneration of cities; stresses the need for additional funding for this special action to meet the additional costs incurred as a result of the long-term effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and rampant inflation; calls on the Commission, therefore, to increase the funding of the Melina Mercouri Prize, which has been endowed with EUR 1.5 million for several years;

Media strand

18. Acknowledges that the Media strand remains the main European instrument providing strategic support to the independent audiovisual sector, which consists primarily of small and medium-sized companies;
19. Acknowledges the positive impact of the targeted measures introduced under the Media strand to broaden the participation of countries with different audiovisual capacities and to strengthen cross-border collaboration;
20. Underlines the vital roles of the European Film Distribution and European Film Sales support schemes in contributing to the cultural diversity of the European audiovisual sector by increasing the cross-border circulation of European films; stresses, therefore, that it is key to maintain adequate funding for both schemes;
21. Stresses that the Creative Europe Regulation 2021-2027 advances the provision of support to networking activities for audiovisual professionals, including creators; points out that this action has not yet been implemented, calls on the Commission, therefore, to implement a dedicated action with the objective of supporting networking activities and cooperation within the audiovisual value chain in a timely manner;
22. Welcomes the introduction of a dedicated action to support the development of video games and immersive content, which has generated considerable interest within the sector; calls on the Commission to support the cultural and creative dimension of this sector by taking into account its specific characteristics when designing the related calls for proposal;

23. Highlights that rising inflation, in a highly competitive audiovisual market, has an impact on production costs; calls on the Commission, therefore, to adapt upwards the funding ceilings with the aim of ensuring that the Media strand delivers its support to the audiovisual industry;

Cross-sectoral strand

24. Regrets that the actions programmed under the Cross-sectoral strand have suffered the greatest delays in implementation, especially in 2021, due to the novelties introduced in the strand;
25. Notes that the Journalism Partnerships and the Media Literacy calls attracted the highest number of applications in 2021-2022, underlining the urgent need for support for the European media sector;
26. Notes that the low success rate of applications under the Cross-sectoral strand, in spite of the overall high quality of the submissions, indicates a high demand for financial support which regrettably cannot be addressed by the current financial envelope;
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27. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the national Creative Europe programme desks.

ANNEX: LIST OF ENTITIES OR PERSONS FROM WHOM THE RAPPORTEUR HAS RECEIVED INPUT

The following list is has been compiled on a voluntary basis under the exclusive responsibility of the Rapporteur. The Rapporteur has received input from the following entities or persons in the preparation of the draft report.

ENTITY
CED Kultur, Germany
Relais Culture Europe, France
CEPI, European Audiovisual Production Association
EFAD, European Film Agency Directors Association
EuroCinema
Europa Distribution
EPC, European Producers Club
FERA, Federation of European Screen Directors
FIAD, International Federation of Film Distributors' and Publishers' Associations
The Society of Audiovisual Authors
UNIC, International Union of Cinemas
APA, Associazione Produttori Audiovisivi
CAE, Culture Action Europe
IETM, International Network for Contemporary Performing Arts
Bozar
British Council
EIBF, European and International Bookseller Federation
FEP, Federation of European Publishers
EFA, European Festival Association
European Arts & Disability Cluster
EWC, European Writers Council
Future of Religious Heritage
ECSA, European Composer & Songwriter Alliance
EMC, European Music Council
LiveEurope
Live DMA
IMPALA, Independent Music Companies Association
PEARLE, Live Performance Europe